DEFINITION OF NEWS: PARTITIONING THE IMPACT ELEMENT

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DEFINITION OF NEWS: PARTITIONING

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PREFACE

This study, concerned with the nature of news, introduced a partition of the Impact element to a tri-dimensional news model and explored its effects on the readers' preferences of news stories.

The study was undertaken to expand on the knowledge about the underlying news structure and the quantification of the accumulative and interactive effects of its elements and subsets.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Nature of News

The news is "stimuli that carry information about an event" (Gibson and Levin, 1975, p. 702), but not all events are selected as news. Thus, "What makes the news?", is a long-standing question that has prompted scores of studies of the nature of news. Attempts to define news have comprised some of the most intriguing and important endeavors in mass communication research.

Wilbur Schramm (1949), for instance, suggested nearly 35 years ago that news is selected in expectation of a reward: Immediate and Delayed. Such expectation, however, does not pertain solely to news, but to anything in the human field of experience.

In general, the absence of an operational definition of the nature of news was for a long time the barrier to an integrated study.

During the past 15 years, however, the inquiry into the nature of news substantially has been systematized through the investigation of factors believed to be salient to all news decision makers in our culture and time.

The line of thought has been that gatekeepers - editors and reporters - reject some stories and accept others according to their preferences or their knowledge about the preferences of the readers. Therefore, what makes the news are the news values (social concepts) shared by those gatekeepers and the readers.

Moreover, a news value is the product of the observer and the observed: the gatekeeper and the account of an event. It follows, too, that when the same gatekeeper judges two stories differently, the reaction is dependent on the story. If different news stories evoke different reactions from the same person, then it behooves the news analyst to search for variation in story characteristics concomitant to variation in judgment.

Stated in different way, what is the basic structure of the news? And what elements does that structure comprise? The full knowledge of such structures would bring more understanding not only about the news media, but also on some interactive phenomena that occur among the source-message-receiver triad in the mass communication process.

A Tri-dimensional Model

The first attempt to describe an underlying news structure and the quantification of the accumulative and interactive effects of its elements was by Ward (1967) about 15 years ago.

This attempt seemed to be a combination of the fundamental epistemological premise of general semantics: "Reality is made up not of things and categories, but of structural relations" (Rapoport, 1970, p. 164), and the semantic content of that structure. Ward, then, was dealing with semantic structures, which, as Simmons (1972, p.72) points out, "is a system of unambiguous representations of meaning interconnected by logical relations."

Ward devised a news framework or model with a minimum number of structured news dimensions semantically different, yet meaningful. Those dimensions and their elements were: Significance (Impact, Magnitude and Neither); Normality (Oddity, Conflict and Normal); and Prominence (Known Principals and Unknown Principals).

Directed by the cited theoretical framework, and by Stempel's (1963) suggestion that the determination of whether the editors and readers have the same concepts of news would be valuable, the pioneer study on this subject basically was directed at the similarities and differences between the news values of those who edit and those who consume the news: decisions on city desks versus reactions by the readers, on hypothetical stories about the mythical city of Middleport, U.S.A. Ten city editors, from eight states located in the South Midwest and East, were asked to rank-order 54 news stories containing the array of news element combinations - three representing each of the 18 possible combinations. They Q-sorted the sample along an

11-point continuum, according to the "probability of use" of the news items. The editors expressed almost the same preference pattern. As it was hypothesized, the Impact element played the most important role in the quantification of the accumulative and interactive effects on the subjects. Ward (1973) concluded that, by using a common input of news comprising the Significance, Normality and Prominence news dimension elements, it is possible to predict the judgment patterns of the editors.

The study has been replicated by Ward himself and several graduate students at Oklahoma State University (e.g., Carter, 1970; Rhoades, 1971; and Galow, 1973).

Also, James K. Buckalew of San Diego State College and Robert W. Clyde (Buckalew, 1969; Clyde and Buckalew, 1969); L. Erwin Atwood (1970) of Southern Illinois University; and Ronald L. Snipes (1973) and Allan Lucas Ludeman (1981), formerly of Oklahoma State University, completed several studies related to news values and Ward's tri-dimensional model. Most of them have shown general agreement of editors and reporters in news values.

The first of those replication studies by Carter (1970) at Oklahoma State University, sought the pattern of selection and evaluation of local news stories used by city editors and their reporters, and to replicate the Ward's study. Ten Oklahoma newsmen - city editors and their respective top local reporters in five cities - participated. Carter first used 24 news items representing Ward's

hypothetical input, and then localized them with names of local people, places and institutions for each of the five cities. The judgments expressed by the gatekeepers in both experiments were similar to the newsmen in Ward's study. The likeness was indicated by intertask correlations of the 24 news items. Reporters and their respective editors showed consensus in their use of 95 percent stories submitted by Carter. Items with Impact received top play.

Rhoades (1971) shed more light on news values in a study of 14 wire service newsmen - seven from Associated Press (AP) and seven from United Press International (UPI). This study also tested the validity and reliability of Ward's tridimensional structure by "localizing" the hypothetical Middleport stories. The hierarchical order given to the news stories by the Oklahoma AP and UPI newsmen was similar to the "probably use" expressed by gatekeepers in the Ward and Carter studies. Over-all, the Impact element emerged again as the best predictor of selection.

The last major study of this initial series was done by then doctoral candidate Galow (1973), who examined the question of whether newspapers were giving subscribers what they want to read. He explored the question in the case of one newspaper, its editors, and a sample of 50 subscribers in an Indiana community. Galow was one of the first who asked readers to judge an input of structured news items. He reported highly similar news preferences between gatekeepers and readers. The reactions offered by the newsmen

were compared with the previous studies using Ward's model, resulting a strong correlation among them.

One earlier study was completed in Iowa City, Iowa, in which 40 subscribers and 13 newspapers staffers judged the original pool of stories used by Ward (Atwood, 1970).

Before that, Buckalew (1969) had asked to 12 television news editors in five Midwest states, to rank 64 news stories. He found striking similarities among the gate-keepers' judgments. Clyde and Buckalew (1969) used the same news pool as the used by the latter author in his previous study, but now the subjects were 15 editors from two jointly owned dailies and three television news editors from the same city. The conclusion was: newspaper and television news editors tend to think alike in their editing behavior. Then, both studies concluded that the input of structured news items can be used as a predictor of editors' judging patterns.

Snipes (1973) wanted to know if subject matter content affects the probable use of the news stories by High and Low authoritarian editors. The levels of authoritarianism of eight editors - four in California, four in Oklahoma - were determined by a dogmatism test. Editors, however, selected the stories according news elements patterning.

More recently, another dimension was added to the original model to test Schramm's reward concept (Badii and Ward, 1980). However, reward elements did not strengthen the previously developed tri-dimensional structure of news

values. The reward concept also had been rejected by Kleeman (1970). She found no relationship between age and education, and reader interest in Immediate and Delayed reward stories on women's pages.

Finally, Ludeman (1981), in the latest attempt to further understand the nature of news and the editors' evaluation and judgments, took two concepts from Ward's model and tricotomized them. He divided the Prominence dimension into High, Medium, and Low, according to the "prestige of occupations," and the Conflict element into Verbal, Physical and Little or No Conflict levels. Ten city editors of Oklahoma newspapers Q-sorted 45 news stories containing 9 possible combinations of element levels, and showed the probable use of hierarchy of these news elements among them. They showed, over-all, a significant relationship in their probable use of news elements and combinations, and gave Physical Conflict highest probable use, regardless of the level of Prominence in the story. The rejection of stories with No Conflict had been found in earlier studies. The author concluded that editors have strong tendency to use "violence", basically presented by Physical Conflict, in their newspapers.

Objective of Study

At this point, the validity of the tri-dimensional model, and the importance of the Impact element is not in doubt. Moreover, there is an obvious necessity of knowing

more about the element. So, the objective of this study was to try to obtain some specific characteristic of the Impact element in order to understand better its action into the cited tridimensional model. According to the operational definition that Ward (1973) and the other researchers have used, the Impact element is:

> . . . any physical or non physical event in which a large number of readers participate - or which affects, now or in the near future, a large number of persons in the community. "Affect" is used in the impact frame. Impact can be damaging or enhacing (p. 27).

It is explicit in this definition, thus, that there are different kinds of Impact, so to speak. One is if a large number of readers participate in a physical or non-physical event. Another is if an event affects a large number of persons in the community.

Furthermore, the key to the definition is the term "affect". For instance, a story about a local plant closing has impact on the workers or affects them; a news involving a mental hospital controversy has impact or affects its patients and families; and a story about a student dress code flare-up has impact upon or affects the students and their parents. Thus, all of those stories contain the Impact element, and were the three highest played localized items by the average Indiana respondent in the study of Galow (1973). However, they were considered as Conflict-Known Principal stories. Did they obtain the highest scores because of their Conflict-Known Principal nature or was it due to the evident Impact content that was not regarded or

considered? Maybe the cited example is among the reasons that prompted Ward (1973, p. 149) to suggest revisions of news elements levels to obtain a better predictability.

In addition, in the study of Galow (1973) some subscribers ranked four Impact stories higher and four lower than did others. The lower played Impact stories, however, contained Oddity. Such variation could be explained by saying (1) Oddity, at least the Oddity presented in those items, is neutral. (It has to be noticed that Galow's findings showed that, over-all, mean probable use of Oddity stories was nearly identical to stories without Oddity (Galow, 1973); and (2) because of the different Impact degree that the news stories contained. It would be a theoretical explanation; consequently, it is necessary to study different levels of Impact as suggested by Ward. In other words, if the basic point rests on some sublevels or sub-elements that are unknown, it seems necessary to partition them further.

As Ward (1973, p. 93) pointed out, "the present, all-inclusive definition of Impact weakens the 3-D framework's stability." What kinds of Impact exist? Impact on who and how? What kind of Impact is going to be measured?

It has been suggested a division between "Economic and Non-economic Impact," and between "Immediate and Potential Impact" (Ward, 1973, p. 60). The economic concept, however, seems to be out of the essence of the model used in the cited studies. First, the theoretical paradigm set up by

Ward is based on semantic dimensions of the news stories rather than on formal or subject matter content aspects of them. The semantic dimensions are the product or consequence of the stories content but the content is not a semantic matter by itself. The semantic dimensions are a kind of symbolic representation of the content; thus, the semantic dimensions and the content are not the same thing.

In other words, the Impact element is there, in the stories, because they contain impact. But this impact is represented in a natural form. That is, there are many natural forms of impact, but the semantic impact does not specifically represent any of them; the semantic impact represent all of the natural impacts: all kind of natural impacts in any story.

It can be said the same thing, for instance, about Prominence: it represents the different prominences that can be found in any story. That is why the tri-dimensional model works very well as a group of basic underlying dimensions. It does not matter what kind of natural prominence contains the story, because it can be represented by the semantic dimension of Prominence. It can be a famous lawyer, a Federal agency, a movie star or a politician. A division of these different natural "prominences" would represent a readership division, because it is not a division of the semantic prominence, but of the natural prominence. Significance, Normality, Prominence, Conflict, Impact, Oddity, etc., as a major dimensions or subdimensions

are generally contained - in different levels - by any story; but not all of the stories contain a murder, a suicide, a movie star, a federal agency, or a public opinion of a politician. Then, to use a semantic dimension or sub-dimension with any natural division of impact, is to mix two different things.

Consequently, it is necessary to devise a division of the semantic impact if we want to follow the semantic tridimensional model.

Second, because of the characteristics of our societies, almost every event implies an economic impact; then, it would present a serious problem to define news with or without economic impact. Third, because the studies based on the tridimensional news model rest upon a functional measurement which generalizations are from a sample of news stories rather than a sample of persons, it would be very difficult to know what function is really changing in the experiment. Thus, the generalization would be false.

On the other hand, a division between Immediate and Potential Impact seems to present the same problems that the Schramm's suggestion about the Immediate and Delayed reward. This division - Immediate and Potential Impact - would account for a study about the readers' nature, but not for the essence of news. In other words, it would depend on the reader considerations of what represents for him an Immediate or Potential impact. Although those divisions are related aspects of the same phenomenon: the characteristic

preference of the news, they are in different stages, therefore, they require separate analysis.

Finally, Ludeman (1981) suggested in his conclusions a breakdown of the Impact element into High, Medium and Low. This proposition, however, would represent an "a priori" categorization, a subjective action of the researcher. Thus, a semantic division is needed to obtain the subjective generalization from the reader. In other words, the readers, by qualifying the semantic levels or categories of Impact (connotative expressions of the text that refer to primary characteristics of Impact) are going to express - a posteriori - the actual subjective semantic value of them. Then, the news analyst will know what really is High, Medium or Low Impact, by matching these categories with the readers' values scores on the semantic division.

On the other hand, readers were chosen as subjects considering they are the final objective of the news. For the news analyst it is more important to determine the preferences of the readers than the editors' selections, at least at this point of the research on this matter. Despite the finding of Galow (1973) about the commonality in news preferences between readers and editors, several analysts consider as debatable the contention that newspapers generally publish what the readers want. Ward (1973, p. 157) concludes that "more studies using readers as respondents seemingly could render a great service to newspaper editors and publishers."

Thus, the principal purpose of this study was to devise a semantic division of the Impact element in a congruent way to the Ward's model to measure its effects on the readers as subjects of the study.

The objective of this study led to a problem that required previous solutions to both theoretical and methodological aspects. The theoretical concern was to create the semantic partition of Impact element that was in harmony with the natural human system of processing information. That is, the division to use had to be in harmony to the psychological processes involved in the action processing information from news (written news stories), which are social stimuli coded in form of words and presented in texts as meaningful wholes. In other words, the proposed division had to fit the current findings and theoretical body on that area. It could not be an arbitrary decision.

On the other hand, the basic experimental question of this study: How do different levels of Impact element of the Ward's tridimensional model affect readers' preferences?, suggested a methodological aspect to solve. The research paradigm has to follow the Ward's model, but also permit measurement of variance produced by the division to propose. The author, then, had to be sure the differences in the news judgments expressed by the readers were produced only by the Impact division. At least, he had to be confident about the origin of the variance by controlling its sources. Therefore, it was necessary to keep constant

or dichotomized the levels of two other important dimension elements, as Prominence and Conflict.

The Prominence dimension, either divided into Known and Unknown Principals or according to the "prestige of occupations" into High, Medium and Low, has shown a weak influence by itself. However, when it is combined with an element from other dimensions, specifically Impact and Conflict, it generally gets a higher preference.

Conflict also has played an important role in the news model. All the earlier studies reported its higher tendency to influence a story's probable use or selection. Ludeman (1981) even suggested its consideration as a separate dimension.

Summary

It has been shown by several studies that it is possible to predict the judgment patterns of editors by using a common input of structured news according to the tri-dimensional model. Moreover, it has been found that news values are shared by gatekeepers and the readers.

Also, Impact has been recognized as the best predictor of selection among the elements. However, it is evident there is a necessity to split Impact further to obtain better understanding about its own nature and the judgment it evokes from editors and/or readers.

Thus, the principal objective of this study was to devise a semantic division of the Impact element congruent

to the Ward model and in harmony with the human system of processing information from texts, that permits the measurement of its effects on readers' preferences.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The inclusion of several studies in this chapter was based on their theoretical relevance and guidance to devise a congruent semantic division of the Impact element. Particular attention was, then, focused on identifying the process in which readers obtain meaning as a forerunner for comprehending any written stimulus. Consequently, priority was given to the studies about the semantic decisions and inferential or evaluative stages by which the readers obtain the implications of news stories and express their preferences for them. In doing this, however, the author found a lack of strong theoretical foundation for dealing with the judgment of story content. The emphasis has been on the nature of the subjects' activities during comprehension, rather than the characteristics of the text itself or its influence on the readers. Hence, through the exposition of literature on research about reading and comprehension of prose materials, the author had to express some implicit assumptions - suggested by the findings - in order to lay a congruent framework for this study.

General Literature on Reading Process

Although there is no consensus about a psychological definition of reading, there seems to be general agreement in considering it a process of extracting information (meaning) from text. That is, the cognitive psychologists specializing in psycholinguistics are not thinking of reading as an action to obtain meaning from phonemes, syllables, words or even sentences, but from the whole text (Kintsch, 1974, 1975a, 1975b, 1977a, 1977b; Kintsch et al., 1975; and Kintsch and van Dijk, 1978). In other words, reading is not simply the decoding of written symbols. It is an active wholistic meaning-centered process.

Thus, the essence, substance or meaning of text is reached by the readers through a semantic system. The internal or semantic code, however, is not unique to language. It serves functions other than its linguistic ones. This code involves concepts of the sorts involved in thought and, in the case of language, it is considered as semantic, whereas when it is used in general thought is considered a cognitive code. That is, readers obtain and store the meaning and implications of the news stories by a semantic process during the reading task. Then, when the readers are asked to express preferences on the news stories, news values are evoked, or elicited, and the stories are selected through the general cognitive process. It means that values are evoked from and expressed on the news stories' meaning and implications, which were obtained

by semantic decisions. However, it has been argued by Foss and Hakes (1978) that the cognitive and semantic processes are identical or, at least, interrelated. Also, Voss (1972) maintains that,

> . . . verbal capacity as well as conceptual capacity develop as a function of neural maturation in relation to experience, and thus one may view the development of structure as part of the normal capacities involved in language and intellectual development (p. 181).

Consequently, the semantic code must be of special interest to the news analyst to devise a partitioning of any element of the Ward model that actually evokes different values. In other words, it is necessary to understand how the content of the news is processed in the semantic stage to be able to understand the general cognitive processes of evaluation and selection. One must know, then, the nature and process of that abstract representation of meaning.

Semantic Representations

The notion of an abstract or semantic representation of meaning comes from experimental findings. Sachs (1967) found that one ordinarily remembers a sentence by reconstructing it from an abstract representation. She showed that subjects in a recognition experiment could detect only very poorly various syntactic changes in sentences, but they had no difficulties in discovering changes in meaning of test sentences. Brandsford, Barclay and Franks (1972) reported readers did not remember words or sentences, but had formed a unified representation of the meaning of each

idea set. Finally, Kintsch (1974) showed that subjects stored the same (semantic) representation in memory for paragraphs that differed in the way they were expressed but not in the meaning. That is, when a semantic interpretation has been made, the meaning is stored.

These studies were based on the assumption (reading is a mental activity, it cannot be directly observed, only inferred) that readers do have a limited supply of precessing resources during any given time span (Miller, 1956; Kintsch, 1974, 1977a; and Kintsch and van Dijk, 1978).

Miller (1956), who introduced the assumption after several studies suggested it, explains:

> . . . the span of absolute judgment and the span of immediate memory impose severe limitations on the amount of information we are able to receive, process and remember. By organizing the stimulus input simultaneously into a several dimensions and successively into a sequence of chunks we manage to break (or at least stretch) this informational bottleneck (p. 95).

An expression of those dimensions that Miller talks about is the underlying (dimensional) structure that Ward has used in news stories. But Miller also talks about "chunks." What are they?

The most currently accepted theoretical explanation about the nature of those "chuncks" has been developed by Kintsh (1974, 1975a, 1977b) in his propositional model. According to this paradigm, the basic and natural units of comprehension are propositions. They are n-tuples (groups) of word concepts, one of which serves as a predictor, and the remaining ones as arguments, each fulfilling a unique

semantic role. For instance, the sentence "the tiger killed the deer" is coded into propositional form as (KILL, TIGER, DEER). This is, however, a representation of the proposition because is does not contain words, but abstract concepts. According to Miller (1956), and using a communication theory term, this process should be called "recoding." According to the propositional model, there are two types of propositions: explicit and implicit. The explicit propositions depict the semantic content of what is directly stated, not the inferences that the reader obtains from the content of the text. The sequence of explicit propositions - composed by concepts - contains the representation of the text, which is retained in the semantic memory (Kintsch, 1974, 1975a).

Among these explicit propositions, there are superordinate (main ideas) and subordinate (details) propositions.

Meyer (1981) contends that news stories are basically superordinate propositions. At least those important propositions occur at the top third of their content structure. Meyer also assumes that the journalists have a general notion of what the readers know and what they intend to communicate to them, and concludes:

> . . . This influences the content they present, the manner in which they organize this content, the emphasis they place on certain content and relationships, and the inferences they assume their readers can easily make (p. 10).

Message input, then, is segmented and organized into a hierarchical structure of propositional units. Those elements that are at high level in the semantic hierarchy are those that permit comprehension of many other events in the story. Those that are relatively incidental would be at a low level in the hierarchy. Consequently, some elements should be judged more important, salient or central than others (Thorndyke, 1975; Lachman, Lachman, and Butterfield, 1979), and more super-ordinate propositions tend to be recalled more often than the relatively subordinate propositions in the hierarchy (Kintsch, 1974).

Consequently, according to Walker and Meyer (1980):

> . . . the findings that an appropriate configuration of relevant facts (. . .) facilitates integration suggests a relationship between the structure of text and the probablility of integrating textual information (p. 264).

That is, facts or events higher in the structure (great impact or prominence, for instance) are better integrated by the reader. In other words, the greater social value or impact of the news message, the more will it be susceptible to organization and selection by the behavioral determinants of the reader. Moreover, the related information common to those prominent facts or events should have a correspondingly higher probability of successful integration. This has been supported by several studies with other (no propositional) representational systems (Kozminsky, 1977; Thorndyke, 1977: and Graesser and Mandler, 1978); and in perceptual experiments (Brunner and Goddman, 1947).

All the above could explain the findings from studies mentioned earlier about the high probable use given to news stories with Impact. But also, this hierarchical order suggests the existence of different levels or categories of Impact.

The other kind - implicit propositions - derived from messages do not need to be explicitly expressed (Kintsch et al., 1975). As Walker and Meyer (1980) have pointed out:

> . . . within a passage of text, some of the relationships among ideas and sets of ideas are stated explicitly. Other relationships are only implied and this must be derived or inferred by the reader (p.263).

This inferential process in known as "structural integration" (Hayes-Roth and Thorndyke, 1979) or "constructive process" (Kintsch and Keenan, 1973; Kintsch et al., 1975). The implicit proposition occurs at acquisition, as the reader attempts to integrate the separate but related facts presented in the news story into a meaningful conceptual whole.

Both kinds of propositions, explicit and implicit, form the new text base of the story. In other words, the stimulus now is not the original input or nominal stimulus ("microstructure"), but the output or coded stimulus ("macrostructure"). Thus, it is necessary to distinguish between the nominal (natural) stimulus and the stimulus as it is coded by the subjects.

Bypolar Contrasts

The acquisition of verbal materials, thus, occurs via a mediating or functional stimulus which is elicited by the nominal stimulus. This functional stimulus is produced by the process of recoding which is mostly a matter of discovering relevant dimensions of difference (Kintsch, 1977b), features or attributes (Voss, 1972). It is based on broad classes of cues which have some discrimination property. Also, Slovic and Mac Phillamy (1974, p. 173) argue that "a multidimensional stimulus is characterized by two or more component attributes, dimensions or cues. For example, tones can be characterized by pitch and loudness." Those attributes, however, are not necessarily restricted to variations in a simple modality. Kintsch (1977a) mentions "the dryness of a wine" as a pleasant example. Nor it is necessary there be a correlation with some physical dimension (e.g., friendliness). Nevertheless, to obtain this characteristic attribute, the subject has to discriminate between opposites. Ogden (1967), in an extensive linguistic and psychological analysis of the nature of opposition, concluded that projection into two opposite directions is emphasized in knowledge as the prime form of relation. He argues that, by this kind of discrimination, we get the concepts of essence and substance. Gibson and Levin (1975) contend that the hierarchical arrangements that results in the macrostructure, or subject's coded stimulus, is the product of distinguishing between bipolar contrasts (march -

no march; riot - not riot; calm - disorder; many - few; etc.). This fits with a general hypothesis that claims that features or dimensions of things are perceived as contrastive relations. This notion refers to the variables that exist or do not exist (march - no march; riot - no riot), and the variables for which mutually exclusive levels exist (calm - disorder; many - few) (Rosch, 1975, 1978).

From that semantic coded stimulus ("macrostructure" or "mediating response"), based on the logical variables or bipolar contrasts mentioned above, the readers obtain the implications or consequences of the stories which are basic for comprehending and which give meaning, and value to them. Moreover, Brewer and Lichtenstein (1975) found subjects recall the implications of a presented stimulus rather than the presented stimulus. This finding fits with the "pragmatic-implications" hypothesis that assumes recall for an abstract level of meaning and that the general aspects of knowledge (implications) are well retained (Brandsford, Barclay; Franks, 1972).

Consequently, the basic assumption or premise of this study, suggested by all the findings and hypotheses cited above, is that readers use the pragmatic implications (which are recalled better than anything else and based on logical selections of bipolar contrasts) for evaluating or judging the news stories along preference or value lines. In other words, if the reader implies a story contains negative or

positive effect, he is going to express his preference on the story according to such implication.

Also, considering that pragmatic implications are based on the functional or mediating stimulus - which is the result of the selection of dichotomous variables (bipolar contrasts) - it can be assumed, as a corollary, that evaluation of the stimulus is based on those concepts selected by subjects as representative or implicating of the content of the stimulus.

Consequently, the evaluation or expression of values on the news stories has an affective character, as any other value.

Bipolar Levels of Impact

There are many bipolar variables a reader can use to obtain the implication from a news story. The interest of this study, however, was only on the Impact element of news. Moreover, only one semantic level of Impact was proposed, according to the following reasoning:

First, those bipolar variables with semantic basis are "non discursive symbols or connotative aspects of the stories . . . do not convey facts, but values" (von Bertalanffy, 1981, p. 51). Thus, their presence in the coded stimulus is going to elicit reader values which have an affective character. But how is the affective character represented? Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) showed that the first two dominant factors in the affective meaning are

Evaluative and Potency, usually in that order. Also, they determined the generalization of that semantic code. That is, human beings share that common semantic framework. "It is constant and has no differences in location of particular concepts" (Osgood, Suci; Tannenbaum, 1957, p. 373).

Second, if the Impact element is considered as a force (the author thinks it is the basic natural force of the news) it can be suggested it contains, as any other physical or social force, a direction or sign and a magnitude. That is, the Impact element contains its own dimensions that correspond to the first two dominant factors in the affective meaning that Osgood and associates discovered. In other words, the directional or signal force corresponds to the Evaluative factor, and the magnitude aspect to the Potency factor, as it will be seen in the following explanation.

The direction or sign of Impact is conveyed by the negative or positive characteristic of its effects. This bipolar variable represents a part of the Impact essence already visualized by Ward and it is contained in his definition, which considers that Impact can be damaging or enhancing. Thus, a division between Positive and Negative can be considered as the primary bipolar variable of Impact a reader can use to obtain the implications of a news story. It corresponds to the Evaluative factor of the affective meaning, which is measured in a semantic differential analysis by an opposite such as good - bad.

The magnitude of Impact notion, which was also visualized by Ward (1973, p. 60) when he asked for a further operationalization of the "magnitude of Impact," fits with the Potency factor. According to Osgood and associates, it can be measured by opposite concepts such as large - small, strong - weak, wide - narrow, potent - impotent, etc. Thus, it is a factor that basically obtains its essence from size (large - small, wide - narrow), and force or power (strong - weak, potent - impotent). In other words, the size aspect is explicit in its quantity, and the force or power is implicit in its quality. Moreover, according to Rosch (1978), "category systems are conceived as having two dimensions by their own: qualitative and quantitative," and a bipolarization of the magnitude of Impact, in this framework, precisely is a semantic categorization of its essence.

At this point, however, it is necessary to remember that Impact refers to an event in which a large number of readers participate as well as an event which affects a large number of persons in the community. So, the force or power aspect of magnitude can be obtained by the quality of the participants in the news stories, which in the tri-dimensional model this function was reserved to the Prominence dimension. This can be cited as the reason why Prominence gives higher values to Impact when they interrelate, but it (Prominence) means almost nothing when it is alone in any story. That is, Prominence is an extension or

potentiator representing the power or quality of Impact. It gives potency or increases the magnitude of Impact.

However, Impact contains by itself a part of magnitude. It conveys its own size dimension represented by the quantity of participants or persons affected by the content of the news. So, the magnitude aspect of Impact is like a coin, it has two sides: one is conveyed by Prominence and the other is conveyed by the Impact itself.

This can explain why the magnitude element that Ward originally used in his first studies did not work. The reason is that magnitude does not exist by itself and alone, but it is conveyed by Prominence - as an auxiliary or potentiator of Impact, by the Impact itself, and maybe some other element or dimension that has not yet been operationalized and included in the tridimensional model.

Consequently, according to the framework of this study and the tri-dimensional model, it is necessary to devise a bipolar variable of Impact that represents the magnitude aspect that it conveys by itself. However, it appears here a challenge for the news analysts: to solve the problem of operationalizing the size aspect of magnitude. The problem exists because nobody has been able to say the number of persons that are affected by any news.

In the Ward's and subsequent studies was evaded this problem by considering Impact, as an event that affects "a large number of persons", which permits to use all the

spectrum or continuum that represents the unknown number of people affected by any story.

Thus, it is not possible - at least up to now - to create a division of the discussed aspects of Impact. It does not mean, however, that magnitude, as discussed here, does not exist or even that it is not the second important dimension of the Impact element. The impossibility of operationalizing it, does not reject or support the notion the Impact conveys its owns magnitude represented in the size or quantity of people that it affects.

Therefore, such impossibility permits only to test the effects of one dimension. In other words, the author could operationalize and test the evaluative aspects of Impact, which is represented by the bipolar division beween Positive and Negative.

Summary

Based on the research upon the process of extracting information from text, it is suggested a semantic division of the Impact element that is congruent to the Ward tri-dimensional news model. The bipolar contrast positive - negative Impact, as a functional stimulus which would carry a basic type of implications of the news stories, are assumed to be the most important and possible Impact element division that would affect the readers' values. This bi-polar variable was visualized by Ward (1973) and it is

contained in his definition of Impact, which considers that element as damaging or enhancing.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to seek out any difference produced in the readers' news preferences for different level (negative-positive) of the Impact element. Also, the author looked for the interaction of those Impact levels with Conflict and Prominence elements. In other words, he sought to determine if the various elements worked in concert to influence reader preferences for news stories comprising the various combinations of Impact, Conflict, and Prominence elements.

The author assembled a pool of 48 structured news stories representing all possible combinations of the Impact, Conflict and Prominence news elements: the positive-negative subset of Impact was used. Conflict was partitioned into High and Little or None. Prominence was divided between Known and Unknown Principals.

Ward's framework essentially was followed. That is, the stories contained a representation of all of three dimensions. Significance was represented by Impact; Normality by Conflict; and Prominence by Known and Unknown Principals. Timeliness and Proximity were held constant in all news stories, maintaining - as in all the previous

studies on nature of news - that these are conditions that amplify the relative importance of the basic news elements rather than being news elements per se. It was assumed that the events in the news stories occurred "today" in the hypothetical city of Middletown.

News Element Definitions

The three independent variables were the Impact, Conflict and Prominence dimensions with their respective divisions or subsets.

Their definitions were:

A. Impact: News of physical and/or verbal participation in an event, action or public opinion of large number of people and/or which affects or represents immediate or potential (in the near future) impact on a large number of readers or members of the community. Impact can be damaging or enhancing, physical and/or psychological, but it must obviously be concrete, as opposed to the abstract.

a-1. Positive Impact: Any positive action or public opinion in which a large number of readers or members of the community participate and/or is positively affected, now or in the near future.

a-2. Negative Impact: Any negative action or public opinion in which a large number of readers or members of the community participate and/or is

negatively affected, now or in the near future.

B. Conflict: Content involving opposition of opinions and/or actions between persons, groups of people, institutions, animals, or a clash between any of those against its natural environment.

b-1. High Conflict: Any verbal, physical - open - clash between persons, groups of people, institutions, animals, or involving a clash of any of those four against its natural environment. The conflict must obviously be intense, with distinct "movement against" by one or both opposing forces.

b-2. Little or No-Conflict: Opinions and/or actions not intense enough to be constituted as (verbal or physical) high conflict. Accidents and conflict resolutions are included in this category.

C. Prominence: News involving any individual, group of people, or institution which has gained fame through inheritance, accomplishment, etc.

c-1. Known Principals: Any famous person, group of people, or institution, known through repeated past publicity or position in society.

c-2. Unknown Principals: Any unknown or not famous person, group of people or institution. Also, any known or famous institution just cited as the casual place where the conflict occurs.

News Element Combinations

The pool of 48 news stories was selected from an initial set of 96 stories. They represented all possible combinations of operationally defined news dimensions and their elements - six each to represent the eight possible combinations of Impact, Conflict and Prominence elements. Some stories were taken from previous studies using the Ward's model and modified to meet current needs. The majority, however, were constructed specifically for this study. Where possible, the constructed stories were actual news stories that appeared in newspapers near the time the experiment was done.

The 48 stories regarded as a sample of items for the readers to judge, are listed in Appendix A. Their selection and verification were supervised by Dr. Walter J. Ward, coordinator of graduate studies in Mass Communication at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, who acted as thesis adviser; and two more judges.

Each story comprised one of eight combinations of news elements:

1. Positive Impact, High Conflict, Known Principals
2. Positive Impact, High Conflict, Unknown Principals
3. Positive Impact, Little or None Conflict, Known Principals
4. Positive Impact, Little or None Conflict, Unknown Principals
5. Negative Impact, High Conflict, Known Principals

6. Negative Impact, High Conflict, Unknown Principals
7. Negative Impact, Little or None Conflict, Known Principals
8. Negative Impact, Little or None Conflict, Unknown Principals

	IMPACT			
	Positive(a_1)		Negative(a_2)	
PROMINENCE	Conflict(b_1)	None(b_2)	Conflict(b_1)	None(b_2)
High(c_1)	a_1 b_1 c_1	a_1 b_2 c_1	a_2 b_1 c_1	a_2 b_2 c_1
Low(c_2)	a_1 b_1 c_2	a_1 b_2 c_2	a_2 b_1 c_2	a_2 b_2 c_2

Figure 1. Paradigm of this Study, Including All Possible Combinations of the Impact, Conflict, and Prominence Levels

The following are examples of news stories comprising various combinations of Impact, Conflict, and Prominence elements.

Positive Impact, High Conflict, Known Principals

Disregarding the opposition of several cities of the state, the Housing and Urban Development Commission decided yesterday to give to Middletown a million dollar federal urban planning grant over the next two-year period.

Cities opposing the plan based their disagreement on the relative small population of Middletown compared with their own larger number of inhabitants.

Positive Impact, High Conflict, Unknown Principals

A flying tackle by a Middletown College student resulted in the capture of a man suspected of throwing a fire bomb into a Mac Arthur Park area night club early this morning.

The student, Steve Wales, 19, told Middletown Fire Department officials that he did not see the fire bombing. He was passing Tiberio's dancing club, when he spotted the resulting blaze and saw a man running from the scene.

Other bystanders helped Wales hold the suspect, Jose Chancon, 19, until police arrived.

Positive Impact, Little or None Conflict, Known Principals

Midwest Oil Co., the United Oil Workers and state employment officials today announced a $5 million program to retrain 4,000 state oil workers who were laid off indefinitely last spring when Rich Oil Co. closed its plants in South Gate and Middletown.

The sponsors described the new program, scheduled to begin Nov. 1 and run through 1983, an unprecedented attempt to match specific laid-off workers with training for new

jobs in labor-short fields such as oil workers, drillers and mechanics.

Positive Impact, Little or None
Conflict, Unknown Principals

About 100,000 state residents over the age of 55, or who are chronically ill, can get free flu vaccine shots through county health departments this fall. State officials said the vaccine program which costs $454,000 will be available to counties in November.

Negative Impact, High Conflict,
Known Principals

An estimated 4,000 local homeowners will be affected by the Supreme Court's ruling that enables federally chartered savings and loans to demand full payment of loans on homes that are sold.

Virtually all homeowners who hold fixed-rate loans from a federally chartered savings and loan association must now pay off their mortages whenever they sell their homes or the buyer must renegotiate the loan.

Negative Impact, High Conflict,
Unknown Principals

A local Baptist deacon beat his wife to death with a fishing weight said the police this morning. Wilbur Charren, 34, admitted that he struck his wife, Susan, 32, in

the head at least a dozen times with a 3-pound salmon weight last January.

Negative Impact, Little or None
Conflict, Known Principals

Color television sets more than 12-years-old give off too much radiation to be used by children for video games and home computers, doctors warn.

The radiation is a problem because people sit very close to the TVs when they are using them as computer screens, said a report by doctors from the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Washington. The report was confirmed by the U.S. Surgeon General.

Negative Impact, Little or None
Conflict, Unknown Principals

One out of 80 residents of Middletown is addicted to alcohol or abuses it, and 1,000 of them are teen-agers, according to a study conducted by a group of city officers. The report indicates that the alcohol addiction has doubled between 1978 and 1982.

Respondents

The dependent variable was the mean scores of the rank expressed by the respondents (readers) to the news stories. Respondents were 50 adult residents of the city of Stillwater, Oklahoma. The study was conducted in the Spring

of 1983. It took about a week to obtain the answers from the 50 readers.

Methodology

Since this study was limited to a small number of readers and utilized a sample of items (structured news stories) it was appropriate to use a form of Stephenson's (1953) Q methodology, which has served as the basis for measurement and analysis in most of the studies on the nature of news that has followed the tri-dimensional Ward's model.

The Q methodology is a way of assigning numerical values and rank ordering a set of structured (or unstructured) items along a normal or quasi-normal forced frequency distribution. The result is a large number of responses from each subject, based on the idea that the set of items used by the researcher is a representative sample of the items, with or without specific regard to the variables or factors underlying them (Kerlinger, 1973). In this study, however, the items or news stories were structured and the variables underlying them were regarded.

This methodology was originally created to test theories instead of individuals. "The basic rationale of Q, as Stephenson sees it, is that we have individuals sort the cards not so much to test the individuals as to test 'theories' that have been built into the cards" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 588). Thus, Q methodology does not require a

sample of persons, only a sample of tests or items. In other words, by using this methodology, the researcher generalized to a parameters of tests for a few people.

Stephenson's Q methodology was especially suited for studying relatively few persons quite intensively. As Kerlinger (1973) described it:

> It [Q methodology] is not well suited to testing hypothesis over large numbers of individuals, nor can it be used too well with large, random samples. One can rarely generalize to populations with Q person samples. . . . Rather, one tests theories on small sets of individuals carefully chosen for their known or presumed possession of some significant characteristic or characteristics (p. 598).

Besides its recommended utility as a method of studying attitudes and values, Q methodology permits to use analysis of variance as well as correlational methods. Also, because Q sorting is interesting most persons seem to enjoy sorting Q decks. It is, perhaps, because the method is both challenging and realistic.

The Q technique used in this study was asking to the readers to Q-sort or rank the 48 structured news stories on a nine-point continuum ranging from "most would like to find and read" to "least would like to find and read" in a local newspaper. The respondents were instructed to read and Q-sort the pool of hypothetical news stories reflecting the structured input of the news elements and their subsets. The respondents, by sorting the news stories revealed their preferences (news values) on the combination of element subsets. The readers, according to the instructions (see

Appendix B) sorted the stories into nine piles, the array making up a normal or quasi-normal distribution, as shown in Figure 2.

	(number of stories per pile)									
Most would like to find and read	2	4	5	8	10	8	5	4	2	Least would like to find and read
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	(scale values)									

Figure 2. Frequency Distribution of 48 News Stories, Showing Their Assigned Values

The numbers above the line were the quantities of stories in each sorting pile; numbers below the line were values assigned to stories in each of the sorting piles. Thus, the stories placed in the extreme left sorting pile received a score of nine each. All statistics were computed from the obtained scores.

Each respondent was advised that he was free to change his decision on the position or rank of any story in the scale at any time in the sorting process. The stories were typed separately on cards to facilitate sorting.

Hypotheses

Since the research problem of this study was to find the effects on the readers' news preferences or judgments of a semantic division of the Impact element, the author

rejected the null hypothesis and stated the following alternative hypotheses:

1. The presence of the positive or negative Impact subsets in news stories will produce a significant difference on the readers' judgments or preferences. That is, the mean score of the readers' responses for the 24 stories containing positive Impact will differ significantly from the mean score for the 24 stories containing negative Impact.
2. The presence of the high or little or none Conflict levels in news stories will produce a significant difference on the readers' preferences or judgments. In other words, the mean score of the readers' selection for the 24 stories containing high Conflict will differ significantly from the mean score for the 24 stories containing little or none Conflict.
3. The presence of the Known or Unknown Principals levels in news stories will produce a significant difference on the readers' preferences or judgments. In other words, the mean score of the readers' selection for the 24 stories containing Known Prinicpals will differ significantly from the mean score for the 24 stories containing Unknown Principals.

4. The interaction or combination of Impact element subsets with the Conflict and Prominence levels will produce a significant differential effect on the readers' judgments.

Analysis of Data

This research incorporates a complete factorial design since three factors were used in the experiment and all levels of each factor were represented in combination with all levels of the other factors. The factor level combinations were listed earlier in this chapter.

The factors or independent variables were the Impact, Conflict and Prominence elements and the levels were their respective subsets: positive, negative, for Impact; high and little or none for Conflict, and Known and Unknown Principals for Prominence. The all possible combinations were structured in an input of 48 stories that the author used to obtain the readers' responses. Altogether there were 2,400 decisions made by the 50 readers. The stories in each group were considered as a representative sample of the news element levels.

The 48 stories, however, were considered as subjects. In other words, there were eight groups of six subjects each who were subjected to different treatments. The treatments or repeated measures corresponded to the 50 readers who in a stage of the analysis were statistically isolated types according to the results of a factor analysis.

Thus, the three independent variables were manipulated systematically to make some analytical comparisons in a 4 X 2 factorial design. The dependent variable was the readers' judgment or ranking scores on the stories.

One main problem of this study was to determine the main and interactive effects of the independent news element levels on the dependent reader's judgments. Consequently, this research design called for factor analysis to reduce the 50 respondents into the most important types of readers.

Factor Analysis

As a method consisting of data reduction, which permits to know what tests or measures - readers, in this study - belong together, factor analysis was used to reduce the 50 respondents into the most important types or factors in order to simplify the analysis of variance of the main and interactive effects, as well as to find out the different tendencies among the readers. That is, from this analysis emerged the types of readers that expressed similar values and how much they did so.

Principal-components or principal factors technique was used in this study. Its objective, as Kerlinger (1973, p. 667) explains it, is to extract "a maximum amount of variance as each factor is calculated. In other words, the first factor extracts the most variance, the second the next most variance, and so on."

Standard (z) Scores

Standard score units or the standardized (z-scores) preference of news stories was used to point out the similarities in readers' news judgments.

A standard z-score is the value of a case (mean preference) that has been standardized with regard to the standard deviation of its distribution. That is, the z-scores can be considered as comparable measures of the degree to which a news story is viewed as one for selection by readers. This made possible to extract the consensus items, which no type of reader deviated more than one standard score from any other type.

Analysis of Variance

As factorial analysis of variance was used a modified type III Analysis of Variance, also known as multi-factor mixed design with repeated measures, which permitted to pull out or extract variances in the scores due to news element levels and statistical or behavioral (readers') types in one test, and variances due to news elements levels and different types of readers. Also, it enabled the author to hypothesize interactions, because the interaction effects could be directly tested, That is, it tested the differential response additional effect due to the combined influence of two (or more) factors.

Summary

This study was designed to seek out any main or interactive effect produced on the readers' news values by the Positive and Negative lavels of the Impact element and their combination with the High and Little or No Conflict levels, and the Known and Unknown Principals Prominence subsets.

It was assembled a pool of 48 structured news stories representing all of the eight possible combinations of the Impact, Conflict and Prominence levels, six for each group.

The pool of 48 stories, selected from an initial set of 96 by three judges, was regarded as a sample of items for the readers to judge, by using Q-methodology, on a nine-point scale.

The independent variables were the elements with their respective subsets. The dependent variable was the mean scores of the rank expressed by 50 adult residents of Stillwater, that acted as respondents.

Principal-components factor analysis was applied to reduce the respondents to the most important types of readers and simplify the analysis of variance of the main and interactive effects.

Standardized mean preference of news stories was used to discover the similarities in readers' news judgments. By using z-scores it was possible to extract the consensus items.

A modified Type III Analysis of Variance permitted to pull out variances in the mean scores due to news levels and behavioral or statistical (readers') types; variances by news elements levels and types of readers; and variance due to the interaction effects.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Types of Readers

Three important types of readers were identified from intercorrelation and factor analysis of all 50 respondents' scores. They explained 47.6 percent of the total variance: Type I, 23.3 percent; Type II, 17.6 percent; and Type III, 6 percent.

Readers in each type agreed more with each other's news judgments than with judgments of readers in other types. In short, Type I clustered ten readers, which showed similar selection pattern, but differed in their preferences from the eleven readers grouped into Type II. In turn, the six readers in Type III showed similar selection patterns, but differed in their preferences from the readers of the other two types. Analysis reported later indicated where the differences were among the types. Each type was studied closely as to its mean news element selection.

Consensus Items

From the standardized preference of news stories (z-scores), reported in Table I, 16 consensus items were extracted from a total of 48. Standard scores showed the

TABLE I

MEAN STANDARD PREFERENCE OF EACH OF THE 48 NEWS STORIES BY EACH READER TYPE

Story No.	News Elements	Description of News Stories	Types of Readers I	II	III
01	PI-HC-UP	A flying tackle	0.08	-0.82	-1.21
02	PI-HC-UP	A young fireman	0.72	-0.90	-1.21
03	PI-HC-UP	A ten-day-old	1.20	0	1.05
04	PI-HC-UP	Sheriff's deputies*	0.16	0.22	-0.73
05	PI-HC-UP	College student	0.72	0.07	-0.73
06	PI-HC-UP	Surgery has been	1.61	0.30	-0.56
07	PI-HC-KP	A plan to increase*	-1.72	-1.12	-1.54
08	PI-HC-KP	The City and State*	-1.37	-0.75	-1.21
09	PI-HC-KP	Disregarding	-1.20	0.07	-0.40
10	PI-HC-KP	Tests showed*	-0.08	-0.90	-0.32
11	PI-HC-KP	Richest Petroleum*	-0.32	-0.15	-0.81
12	PI-HC-KP	A woman who gave*	0.48	1.12	0.24
13	PI-NC-UP	About 100,000	-0.64	-0.15	0.48
14	PI-NC-UP	Machinery has been	-1.12	-0.37	0.65
15	PI-NC-UP	A Middletown	0.72	1.27	-0.40
16	PI-NC-UP	Middletown fire	-1.69	0.67	-0.16
17	PI-NC-UP	Middletown airline*	-1.29	-0.82	-1.21
18	PI-NC-UP	Striking teachers	-0.80	0.37	-0.40
19	PI-NC-KP	Midwest Oil Co.	-0.96	0.45	0.08
20	PI-NC-KP	GNC Energy*	-0.64	-0.97	-0.73
21	PI-NC-KP	An emergency	-0.40	1.57	-0.73
22	PI-NC-KP	Elementary	-1.45	0.07	-1.13
23	PI-NC-KP	Rep. Carl Peters	-1.62	0.75	-1.21
24	PI-NC-KP	A judge for	-1.20	-0.15	-0.56
25	NI-HC-UP	A 7-year-old*	0.80	0.37	0.08
26	NI-HC-UP	A local baptist	0.72	-1.65	-0.56
27	NI-HC-UP	A robber described	1.29	-0.67	0.81
28	NI-HC-UP	A two day old	1.37	-0.52	-0.97
29	NI-HC-UP	A Middletown teacher	1.77	-0.75	0.89
30	NI-HC-UP	Two women were	1.29	-0.90	1.21
31	NI-HC-KP	A tornado*	0.48	-0.22	0.65
32	NI-HC-KP	Last minute talks*	-1.12	-0.60	-0.16
33	NI-HC-KP	An estimated	-0.72	-0.37	2.68
34	NI-HC-KP	The Supreme Court	0.16	1.57	2.03
35	NI-HC-KP	A local university	1.12	-0.67	0.89
36	NI-HC-KP	Middletown City*	-1.04	-0.37	-0.32
37	NI-NC-UP	One out of 80*	0.88	0.15	0.89
38	NI-NC-UP	About 10 cases	1.20	-1.50	0.48
39	NI-NC-UP	Twenty local*	1.45	2.40	1.62
40	NI-NC-UP	Toxic gases	-0.08	-1.72	-1.78
41	NI-NC-UP	At least 18	0	1.95	0.24
42	NI-NC-UP	A Middletown teen-age	0.32	1.57	-1.38

TABLE I (Continued)

Story No.	News Elements	Description of News Stories	Types of Readers I	II	III
43	NI-NC-KP	The second	-0.88	1.57	0.65
44	NI-NC-KP	The failure of	-1.12	1.65	0.40
45	NI-NC-KP	Color television	0.24	0.22	1.86
46	NI-NC-KP	A fire raced*	0.40	0.52	0.24
47	NI-NC-KP	State health*	0.48	-0.07	0.40
48	NI-NC-KP	"Killer bees"	1.20	-1.65	1.05

*Consensus items
PI: Positive Impact
NI: Negative Impact
HC: High Conflict
NC: Little or No Conflict
KP: Known Pricipals
UP: Unknown Principals

individual scores in the standard deviation units above or below the mean of 5.00.

If the z-scores assigned to any given story by the three types of readers differed among them less than one standard score, the story was considered a consensus item, or an item given the "same" preference by the three types of readers.

Table II lists the 16 consensus items - eight that were most selected and eight least preferred - among the three types of readers, which show the high preference for Negative Impact stories over the Positive Impact stories. That is, the three types of readers agreed to select

TABLE II

HIGH AND LOW CONSENSUS NEWS STORIES: ALL READERS

Story No.	News Elements	Description of News Stories	Mean Z-Scores
		Highest Preference by All Readers	
39	NI-NC-UP	Twenty local children	1.84
37	NI-NC-UP	One out of 80	0.64
32	NI-HC-KP	Last minute talks	0.62
12	PI-HC-KP	A woman who gave	0.61
25	NI-HC-UP	A 7-year-old	0.41
46	NI-NC-KP	A fire raced	0.38
31	NI-HC-KP	A tornado	0.30
47	NI-NC-KP	State health	0.27
		Lowest Preference by All Readers	
07	PI-HC-KP	A plan to increase	-1.46
08	PI-HC-KP	The City and the State	-1.11
17	PI-NC-UP	Middletown airline	-1.10
20	PI-NC-KP	GNC Energy	-0.78
36	NI-HC-KP	Middletown City	-0.57
10	PI-HC-KP	Tests showed	-0.43
11	PI-HC-KP	Richest Petroleum	-0.42
04	PI-HC-UP	Sheriff's deputies	-0.11

PI: Positive Impact
NI: Negative Impact
HC: High Conflict
NC: Little or No Conflict
KP: Known Principal
UP: Unknown Principal

Negative Impact stories high: seven of the eight top consensus items comprised this news element. On the other hand, the readers agreed to the greatest degree to reject stories with Positive Impact, since of the eight least selected consensus items, seven contain that news element.

The only Positive Impact story that is among the eight highest preference consensus items is (Story 12) about a "woman who gave birth after unsuccessful sterilization surgery;" therefore, it might have been considered as negative (Negative Impact) by the readers.

Conversely, the only Negative Impact story that resulted among the eight lowest preference consensus items is (Story 36) about a "Middletown City Councilman Arthur Miller (that) was accused this morning of conflict-of-interest violations in voting to award millions of dollars in grants to an East Side antipoverty organization that was paying him thousands of dollars in rent." Consequently, it might have been selected as positive (Positive Impact) by the readers.

Differences in News Values

To determine the independent and interactive effects of the news elements on readers' judgments, a modified Type III analysis of variance was used. In this analysis the news dimensions and types of readers were independent variables, and the readers' preferences of the news elements represented the dependent variable (scores assigned to the

stories and presumed to be indications of the readers' preferences for the stories). This procedure made possible the extraction of differences in news element preference by the different types of readers separated through the earlier factor analysis.

As mentioned, each news dimension was represented by two news elements. The Significance Dimension carried the Positive and Negative Impact levels; the Conflict Dimension was partitioned into High and Little or None levels; and the Prominence dimension was dichotomized into Known and Unknown Principals.

These dimensions and their elements characterized the structure of news in the 48 stories which the 50 readers sorted along a nine-point, quasi-normal continuum. The 48 stories were considered as subjects for the Type III variance analysis. That is, the stories were subjected to the three types of "reader treatments." Six stories were considered as representative subjects belonging to each of the eight groups of news elements and combinations thereafter. From the analyses, main, as well as interactive, effects of element subsets could be determined.

Main Effects of News Elements

Hypotheses numbers 1, 2 and 3 (Methodology chapter) stated that levels of Impact, Conflict and Prominence--in and of themselves--would make a significant difference in readers' story preferences.

In Table III, the only pairs of preference means that significantly differ are for types of Impact. Negative Impact, with a mean of 5.38, was preferred significantly over Positive Impact, with a mean of 4.58 ($F = 9.57$, $p<.01$).

TABLE III

MEAN PREFERENCES OF CONFLICT, PROMINENCE AND SIGNIFICANCE DIMENSION ELEMENTS ACROSS THREE TYPES OF READERS

News Dimension	News Elements	Mean Preference
CONFLICT	High Conflict	4.98
	Little or No Conflict	4.98
PROMINENCE	Known Principals	4.96
	Little-Known or Unknown Principals	5.00
SIGNIFICANCE	Positive Impact	4.58*
	Negative Impact	5.38*

*Difference $p<.01$

Whether stories contained Conflict or Known Principals made little difference in readers' preferences. Stories with and without these news elements earned mean preferences

that hovered near, or at 5.00, the mean preference of all 48 stories in the Q-distribution.

As for the difference between levels of Impact, readers preferred the Negative over the Positive.

Some of the greatest differences in preference for Negative over Positive Impact are shown in Table IV in comparison of ten stories, whose only difference is level of Impact.

TABLE IV

FIVE HIGHEST MEAN PREFERENCE STORIES WITH NEGATIVE IMPACT AND THE FIVE LOWEST MEAN PREFERENCE STORIES WITH POSITIVE IMPACT

Story No.	Significance Dimension Element	Description of News Stories	Mean Scores
39	Negative Impact	Twenty local children	7.33
34	Negative Impact	The Supreme Court	6.60
41	Negative Impact	At least 18 persons	5.96
45	Negative Impact	Color television sets	5.96
37	Negative Impact	One out of 80	5.80
22	Positive Impact	Elementary and	3.96
17	Positive Impact	Middletown airline	3.60
08	Positive Impact	The City and State	3.60
23	Positive Impact	Rep. Carl Peters	3.50
07	Positive Impact	A plan to increase	3.50

So, regarding main effects--the saliency of story elements, themselves--only hypothesis No. 1 was confirmed. The effects of news elements, for the most part, had to do with the type of reader, as explained in the discussion of interactive effects.

Interactions: News Elements by Reader Types

As stated above, only one news dimension--Impact--contained elements that differentiated the readers on preference.

Furthermore, the mean preference for a news element did not depend on its being accompanied by another news element.

However, the mean preference for each and every news element depended on one type of reader, sometimes two.

Impact by Reader Type. The higher preference for Negative Impact clearly came from Reader Types I and III, as shown in Table V. Readers in Type I assigned mean preferences of 5.52 and 4.49 to Negative and Positive Impact elements, respectively, for a mean difference of 1.03. Type III readers gave Negative Impact a 1.23 higher mean preference (5.59 minus 4.36 = 1.23). Both these differences would occur by chance less than one time in 100 (CD = .67). Type II Readers showed "equal" preference for Negative and Positive Impact.

TABLE V

MEAN PREFERENCES OF THREE TYPES OF READERS FOR POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT ELEMENTS

SIGNIFICANCE News Dimension Elements	Types of Readers I	 II	 III	Mean Totals
Positive Impact	4.49	4.92	4.36	4.59
Negative Impact	5.52	5.02	5.59	5.38
Mean Totals	5.00	4.97	4.98	4.98

NOTE: Critical Difference between vertical or horizontal pairs of means = .67, $p<.01$.

Table VI shows five common Negative Impact stories between Types I and III, disregarding consensus items, that obtained high scores from both types of readers.

Conflict by Reader Type. Stories with Conflict were preferred by Type I of readers, whereas the stories with Little or No Conflict attracted Type II, as shown in the Table VII.

Readers in Type I gave a mean preference of 5.37 to the Conflict element, but only 4.63 to the Little or No Conflict, to produce a mean difference of 0.74. Conversely, Type II Readers valued the Little or No Conflict element

with a mean preference of 5.35, which is 0.78 higher than the 4.57 mean preference assigned to the Conflict stories. Both these differences would occur by chance less than one time in 100 (CD = .63). Type III Readers were indifferent to Conflict in the news.

TABLE VI

MEAN STANDARD PREFERENCES FOR THE HIGHEST FIVE COMMON NEGATIVE IMPACT STORIES BETWEEN READERS TYPE I AND III

Story No.	Description of News Stories	Types of Readers I	Types of Readers III	Mean Totals
39	Twenty local children	1.45	1.62	1.53
29	A Middletown teacher	1.77	0.89	1.33
30	Two women were	1.29	1.21	1.25
48	"Killer bees"	1.20	1.05	1.12
37	One out of 80	0.88	0.89	0.88

Tables VIII and IX show the highest five mean standard preferences of Readers Type I and II for High Conflict and Little or No Conflict stories, respectively.

A comparison of Tables VIII and IX shows that Types I and II readers radically differ on preference for Conflict

and No Conflict. This breakdown of Conflict apparently made a difference not detected in previous studies in which respondents, generally, showed high agreement on Conflict as a single element.

TABLE VII

MEAN PREFERENCES OF THREE TYPES OF READERS FOR CONFLICT AND NO CONFLICT NEWS ELEMENTS

CONFLICT News Dimension Element	Types of Readers I	II	III	Mean Totals
High Conflict	5.37	4.57	4.99	4.98
Little or No Conflict	4.63	5.35	4.97	4.98
Mean Totals	5.00	4.96	4.98	4.98

NOTE: Critical Difference between vertical or horizontal pairs of means = .63, $p<.01$.

Prominence by Reader Type. The Unknown Principals clearly obtained the higher preference from Readers in Type I. On the other hand, the Known Principals element was preferred by Reader Type III. Table X shows the mean

TABLE VIII

HIGHEST FIVE MEAN STANDARD PREFERENCE OF READERS TYPE I FOR HIGH CONFLICT STORIES (TYPE II'S MEAN STANDARD PREFERENCE IN PARENTHESES)

Story No.	Description of News Stories	Mean Z-Scores
29	A Middletown teacher	1.77 (-0.75)
06	Surgery has been	1.61 (0.30)
28	A two-day-old	1.37 (-0.52)
30	Two women were	1.29 (-0.90)
17	Middletown airline	1.29 (-0.82)

TABLE IX

HIGHEST FIVE MEAN STANDARD PREFERENCE OF READERS TYPE II FOR NO CONFLICT STORIES (TYPE I'S MEAN STANDARD PREFERENCE IN PARENTHESES)

Story No.	Description of News Stories	Mean Z-Scores
41	At least 18 persons	1.95 (0.00)
44	The failure at Millcot's	1.65 (-1.12)
42	A Middletown teen-age	1.57 (0.32)
43	The second substantial	1.57 (-0.88)
21	An emergency	1.57 (-0.40)

preferences of Prominence elements for the three types of readers.

TABLE X

MEAN PREFERENCES OF THREE TYPES OF READERS FOR KNOWN AND UNKNOWN PRINCIPALS ELEMENTS

PROMINENCE News Dimension Element	Types of Readers I	 II	 III	Mean Totals
Known Principals	4.45	5.12	5.32	4.96
Unknown Principals	5.56	4.82	4.63	5.00
Mean Totals	5.00	4.97	4.98	4.98

NOTE: Critical Difference between vertical or horizontal pairs of means = .62, $p<.01$.

Readers in Type I assigned a mean preference of 5.56 and 4.45 to Unknown and Known Principals elements, respectively, for a mean difference of 1.11. Type III readers, however, gave Known Principals the higher mean preference: 5.32, and the lower mean preference, 4.63, to Unknown Principals, to produce a mean difference of 0.69. Again, those differences would occur by chance less than one time in 100 (CD = .62).

Type II readers showed a similar preference for both Known and Unknown Principals.

Tables XI and XII show the highest five mean standard preferences of Readers Type I and III for Unknown and Known Principals, respectively.

News Values: Summary

Across all readers, highest preference was assigned to Negative Impact, whose mean preference emerged as the only significant main effect in this study. Whether stories contained Conflict or Known Principals made little difference in the preferences of readers, as a group.

Furthermore, the mean preference for a news element did not depend on its combination with another news element. The preference for Conflict and Prominence elements, however, depended on the reader type.

Type I preferred the stories with Negative Impact, Unknown Principals and High Conflict. This group of readers based its selection on what can be called "hard popular" news.

Type II selection was determined by the presence of Little or No Conflict and Negative Impact. Neither were the levels of Prominence important to this group of readers. They might be called "effect" readers, in that they are not as concerned with big names and conflict as they are with how events in the news adversely affect members of the community.

TABLE XI

HIGHEST FIVE MEAN STANDARD PREFERENCE OF READERS TYPE I FOR UNKNOWN PRINCIPAL STORIES (TYPE III'S STANDARD PREFERENCE IN PARENTHESES)

Story No.	Description of News Stories	Mean Z-Scores
29	A Middletown teacher	1.77 (0.89)
06	Surgery has been	1.61 (-0.56)
39	Twenty local children	1.45 (1.62)
28	A two-day-old	1.37 (-0.97)
30	Two women were	1.29 (1.21)

TABLE XII

HIGHEST FIVE STANDARD MEAN PREFERENCE OF READERS TYPE III FOR KNOWN PRINCIPAL STORIES (TYPE I'S STANDARD PREFERENCE IN PARENTHESES

Story No.	Description of News Stories	Mean Z-Scores
33	An estimated 4,000	2.68 (-0.72)
34	The Supreme Court	2.03 (0.16)
45	Color television sets	1.86 (0.24)
48	"Killer bees"	1.05 (1.20)
03	A ten-day-old	1.05 (1.20)

It can be noticed, by comparing the standard scores on Tables XI and XII, that Readers Types I and III are not extremely opposed in their preferences for Known and Unknown Principals, as it occurs with the Reader Types I and II on their preference for Conflict and No Conflict levels.

This suggests that the selection of Prominence levels by types of readers tends to depend on the presence of Conflict and Impact levels, although the analysis of variance showed that overall the mean preference for a news element did not depend on its being accompanied by another news element.

Type III preferred Known Principals and Negative Impact. The presence or absence of Conflict was not important to this group. The "Big-Name-Effect" group, as Type II is more concerned with adverse effects implied in news accounts, but it also seems impressed with prominent principals.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study was an attempt further to understand the nature of news, by investigating how a division of the Impact element affects the readers' judgments.

A tri-dimensional news model served as a basis to structure a pool of news stories, six for each of the eight possible combinations of news elements.

The stories comprised three news dimensions and their elements. They were: Significance, divided into Positive and Negative Impact; Conflict, subset as Conflict and Little or None; and Prominence, partitioned in Known and Unknown Principals.

Timeliness and proximity were held constant since they are "conditions" that amplify the relative importance of the basic news elements rather than being news elements per se. The events were assumed to have occurred "today". The stories were selected from an initial group of 96 stories by three judges.

To determine the preference of news element combinations in the stories, 50 readers (adult residents in

Stillwater, Oklahoma) were asked to Q-sort 48 stories on a nine-point quasi-normal continuum ranging from "most would like to find and read" to "least would like to find and read."

The independent variables were the news elements in the 48 stories selected for the study. The dependent variable was the subjective readers' preferences for the stories. Preference was assumed to be the scores assigned to them.

Summary of Research Findings

This exploratory study initially obtained 2,400 preference scores: the 48 stories in the experiment were judged by 50 respondents.

From intercorrelation and factor analyses of all the respondents emerged three important types of readers. This enabled the researcher to explain the nature of variance in mean preferences by different types of readers.

From the standardized preference of news stories (z-scores), the author extracted 16 consensus items from the total of 48. Among those 16 consensus items were eight stories on which the readers most agreed to select and eight stories on which the readers most agreed to reject. The agreement on selection was generalized in favor of Negative Impact stories, since seven of the eight preferred items contained that element.

Conversely, the agreement on rejection was generalized against the Positive Impact stories, since seven of the

eight rejected items contained that element.

The analysis of variance confirmed the hypothesis number 1 of this study, stated in Chapter III. That is, different kinds or levels of Impact would affect readers' preferences. Negative Impact, with a mean preference of 5.38 was significantly preferred over Positive Impact, with a mean preference of 4.58.

The presence or absence of Conflict or Known Principals made little difference in readers' preferences. Therefore, hypotheses numbers 2 and 3 were rejected.

Also, the mean preference for a news element did not depend on its combination with another element. Consequently, hypothesis number 4 was rejected. The effects of Conflict and Prominence news elements, principally, were related to the type of reader. Negative Impact was the only constant element among the readers' mean preferences.

The "Hard-Popular" reader Type I was attracted by Unknown Principals, Conflict, and Negative Impact.

The "Effect" Type II readers' preferences were determined by the presence of Little or No Conflict and Negative Impact. The levels of Prominence did not produce variation in the preference of these readers.

Finally, the "Big-Name-Effect" Type III readers' decisions principally were affected by Known Principals and Negative Impact. Conflict was not relevant to this group preferences.

Conclusions

Because the primary objective of this study was to devise a semantic division of Impact - as the principal element of the Significance dimension - and to explore its effects on the readers, this section will present some conclusions primarily related to the present study and some other preliminary conclusions regarding the tri-dimensional news model.

Conclusions of the Present Study

The findings tended to support the basic assumption or premise of this study: readers use the pragmatic implications of the news stories for evaluating or judging the news.

In other words, as a substantive analysis of the cited findings, it must be emphasized the significant presence of the two different kinds of Impact used in this study as determinant factors in the process of news selection by the readers. This indicates that the actual most Impact is represented for the readers by the Negative stories, and lesser Impact is represented by the Positive Impact stories.

Although there was not any significant combined action between Impact, Conflict and Prominence elements, their presence or absence affected the reader types' preferences in different ways. It must be remembered that the interaction between the reader types and the individual or combined news elements, produced significant differences.

Reader Type I significantly based his preferences on the presence of the three news dimension elements: Unknown Principals, Negative Impact and Conflict.

Types II and III readers, however, based their selections on only two news dimension elements: Little or No Conflict - Negative Impact, and Known Principals - Negative Impact, respectively.

It confirms, once again, that there is a pattern of selection among the different types of readers depending on the structure of news. In other words, according to the specific findings of this study, the emerged pattern can be described as follows:

The readers principally tended to select the news stories that had the implications of Impact. The findings showed that they prefer the Negative Impact stories.

The differences among readers were based on the preferences for the Conflict and Prominence. Type I readers, for instance, preferred Unknown Principals and Conflict. Type II preferred No Conflict and disregarded the Prominence elements. Finally, the third type preferred Known Principals and disregarded the Conflict element.

In other words, disregarding Negative Impact, preferred by all readers, the news elements preferred by Type I were rejected or considered not as important by Types II and III. That is, Type I preferred stories without Known Principals, while such stories were rejected by Type III and considered not important by Type II. Type I preferred Conflict, but it

was rejected by Type II and considered not important by Type III.

Preliminary Conclusions on the News Model

Two basic preliminary conclusions can be expressed on the tri-dimensional news model from this study. Both preliminary conclusions are upon two theoretical assumptions underlying the news model since Ward (1973) devised it. They are the assumed independence among elements, and the supposed mutual exclusiveness of elements.

The author's preliminary conclusions reject those two theoretical assumptions based on the following considerations.

Rejection of the Independence Among Elements. Among some stories comprising Negative Impact, Conflict and Known Principals, the Negative Impact seems to stem from persons of "high" prominence - respected professionals commit sins. That is, the Negative Impact is upon image of doctors, lawyers, etc. For instance, the story about "Dr. Edward Jackson, 38, a physician of San Gabriel Community Hospital, was caught yesterday in a woman's apartment, adorned in surgical gloves and a ski mask . . .," initially was considered to comprise Negative Impact, Conflict and Known Principals. However, it finally was rejected by the judges who expressed the following doubts: "Would it be Negative Impact, for example, if the rapist were a garbage man?

it Positive Impact if people know that highly prominent people do not escape 'the long arm of the law'?" So, the combination of Negative Impact and Known Principals suggested an important conclusion: some stories, such as the example cited above, tend to reject the theoretical assumption about the independence - as a generalized characteristic - of the elements and subsets regarded in the model. That is all the elements and subsets are not independent. In other words, sometimes they are independent but sometimes they are interdependent.

Rejection of the Mutual Exclusiveness Between Elements. A frequent indication from the judges on some of the rejected stories during the selection process was that the story could be viewed positive by some readers, but negative by others. For instance, the story, "Students who graduate from high school in 1986 will face new admissions requirements at the State University under a plan unanimously endorsed last night by the Regents Education Policy Committee," could be viewed as positive by parents, but negative by students. It must be considered, thus, the possibility of using a new third Impact level that reads "Both" and comprises the two levels used in this study at the same time.

Therefore, this would reject another theoretical assumption of the news model: mutual exclusiveness of the elements and subsets. That is, it is possible that some

stories contain at least two levels or subsets of the same elements.

Recommendations

Regarding findings and conclusions of this study, the author strongly suggests redefinitions of the news elements that consider the following:

The Impact element needs three (not two) levels: Negative, Positive, and new one that reads "Both"; and, of course, an exhaustive level, "Little or None," should be retained.

Since the stories with Conflict resolution cannot be considered as Conflict stories, neither as without Conflict, they need a new classification. So the Conflict element needs three levels: Conflict, Little or No Conflict, and Conflict Resolution. Also, the author suggests unintentional clashes, such as accidents be placed under the "Little or No Conflict" level.

During the news selection process for this study, stories mentioning a credible source were indiscriminately considered by the judges as comprising Prominence (Known Principals). The author thinks, however, that credibility is not always prominence. Credibility is a multidimensional factor. For instance, a source without prominence can be credible as well. So, credibility does not always imply prominence, because it also depends on some other elements. This has been concurrently indicated in the literature on

source and media credibility (for instance: Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Berlo, Lewert and Mertz, 1969; and Mosier and Ahlgren, 1978).

Therefore, it can be said that when a credible source is cited, it does not always mean that there is prominence or vice versa. It can also be said that prominence is not only inherent to the person or institution, but also to the communicative (psychological) function that the person or institution has in the story. This communicative function is represented in the stories by the importance level of the role that the actor has, for instance, in a conflict story. If this role is not important, the communicative function is not important; consequently, the expected prominence that the actor has comes down to almost zero. This is the result of the structuralized nature of news. That is, its essence is not just the sum of its parts, but the relationships between them.

All this leads the author to propose the redefinition of the Prominence element according to a "functional" approach that considers the role or function that a famous or "prominent" principal has in the story, especially in a conflict story, where the important are the principal actors. It should be pointed out, however, that when the story does not contain conflict, any prominent element works prominently because, in this kind of news, it (the prominent element) is news by itself. The person or institutions in a

story without Conflict is the principal actor, executor or perceptor of the action in the event.

Also, when a "prominent" element is just a decorative or casual factor, without any important function, but solely as the casual place where a conflict is happening or it recently was resolved, it cannot be considered as a prominent factor. This generally occurs with the "prominent" institutions.

For this "functional" approach to redefine Prominence, some of the findings and conclusions obtained by psycholinguistics, on the process of extracting information from texts, can be very helpful.

Finally, the author suggests a probabilistic study on the frequencies of appearance of the different elements and subsets from a sample of actual news stories. Then their rank scores should be correlated with the rank selection (mean scores) of a group of readers. Such a study would offer the relationship between the probabilistic presence of the elements and subsets, and the preferences by the readers.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

FORTY-EIGHT NEWS STORIES UNDER RESPECTIVE NEWS ELEMENT COMBINATIONS OF THE TRI-DIMENSIONAL NEWS MODEL

Positive Impact, Conflict,

Unknown Principals

Story 1

A flying tackle by a Middletown College student resulted in the capture of a man suspected of throwing a fire bomb into a Mac Arthur Park area night club early this morning.

The student, Steve Wales, 19, told Middletown Fire Department officials that he did not see the fire bombing. He was passing Tiberio's dancing club, when he spotted the resulting blaze and saw a man running from the scene.

Other bystanders helped Wales hold the suspect, Jose Chancon, 19, until police arrived.

Story 2

A young fireman who heard a woman pleading for mercy rushed into a Middletown garage this morning and fired a warning shot that saved her from being suffocated by two would-be rapists, police said.

Officials said the hero, Radames Pena, 22, was getting ready for work in his apartment on Garden Street at 5:45 a.m. when he heard what "sounded like a lovers quarrel in the garage downstairs." He said he yelled out the window and got only muffled responses.

Story 3

A ten-day-old-baby boy, stolen yesterday from the Middletown Community Hospital, was found safe this morning at the Union Bus Station after a telephoned tip, the police reported.

Cindy Thomas, 33, was waiting for the bus to Fritch and carrying the child in a box, when the police arrived. The baby, Martin Wood Jr., was rescued and returned to his mother Carla at the hospital. The case has provoked an investigation on the lack of security in the hospital.

Story 4

Sheriff's deputies recaptured the seven prisoners who escaped last night from sheriff's bus transporting them to the Rock State Prison.

They were caught in a Bristol County farm, 30 miles from here where they were seen by a cowboy who called the police, according to the official report.

Story 5

A Middletown College student survived a shark attack yesterday when he was competing in a national sailing tournament in Long Beach, California.

Bobby Steward, a 20-year-old computer science student, fell accidently into the water and almost immediately was attacked by a shark and suffered a nine-inch bite on his

left arm. He was rescued and taken to shore by the crewmen of a nearby sailboat.

Story 6

Surgery has been performed to separate 1 year-old Siamese twins whose parents once were charged with attempted murder for allegedly denying them food.

Nancy and Karen Miller, joined at the pelvis and sharing several vital organs, underwent nine hours of surgery. They were listed in a good condition, a hospital spokesman said.

Positive Impact, Conflict,
Known Principals

Story 7

A plan to increase the price of state auto license tags in 1983 by an average of $10 per tag was rejected yesterday by the majority of legislators.

The plan had been proposed by the Gov. Robert Romanus, but it was strongly criticized by the majority of legislators who considered it as unnecessary.

Story 8

The city and state have taken another step forward in their plan to construct a Union Station in downtown Middletown. Spokesmen for the city and the state announced

they will go ahead with plans to file land condemnation proceedings in Municipal Court on Monday.

Rich Oil Company, which owns the land where the Union Station will be constructed, has rejected previous government purchase efforts.

Story 9

Disregarding the opposition of several cities of the state, the Housing and Urban Development Commission decided yesterday to give to Middletown a million dollar federal urban planning grant over the next two-year period.

Cities opposing the plan based their disagreement on the relative small population of Middletown compared with their own larger number of inhabitants.

Story 10

Tests showed no contamination of a bottle of Soft Plus eyedrops purchased here over the weekend by a 42-year-old woman who later complained of eye burns. "It was a false alarm," said Susan Bond of the State Department of Health Services. "Those drops were physically normal. But if you have an infection, those drops sometimes sting when you put them in your eye."

Story 11

Richest Petroleum Co., Middletown, announced today it will not raise the price of its regular gasoline to

retailers. The decision was not expected and caused a protest from the other state petroleum companies that had announced an increase in their prices.

Story 12

A woman who gave birth after unsuccessful sterilization surgery may sue her doctor for damages, including the cost of rearing the child, the state Supreme Court has ruled

The justices also ruled that she may collect damages for undergoing the stress of an unwanted pregnancy. The decisions were on the case of Carol Ochs, wife of the banker William Ochs III, president of the National Trust Bank.

Positive Impact, No Conflict,
Unknown Principals

Story 13

About 100,000 state residents over the age of 55, or who are chronically ill, can get free flu vaccine shots through county health departments this fall. State officials said the vaccine program which costs $454,000 will be available to counties in November.

Story 14

Machinery has been set in motion to provide Middletown with another major downtown project, a $117 million, 3.3 acre hotel, office and retail development which could be under construction as early as 1983.

Story 15

A Middletown College student is studying ways to produce a fungus that could be used to help reduce populations of disease-carrying mosquitoes around the world. Aristotle Dommas, 26, said the funguas lagenidium giganteum, which attacks only mosquitoes and is harmless to persons and animals, is a natural enemy of mosquitoes.

Story 16

Middletown Fire Prevention Week begins today with an educative effort by fire officials to inform residents on measures to take to insure fire safety.

As in the past, the highlight of the week will be the Operation Edith (Exit Drills in the Home) scheduled for 8 p.m. Wednesday, during which time fire departments throughout the state will join in sponsoring individual fire drills in residential homes.

Story 17

Middletown Airline Co. said it has reached agreement with its major lenders to provide additional working capital based on a plan that shows the company regaining profitability by the first quarter of 1983.

Donald J. Lloyd, president of the local airline, said the agreement provided for advancements of approximately $3.8 million to satisfy payments on guaranteed debt. Interfirst Bank of Dallas, the airline's principal lender, agreed

to advance $2.4 million this month, and stop its legal action against the airline.

Story 18

Striking teachers at the Morril Junior High School stopped picketing last night after a court injunction was issued to ban the action.

A spokesman for the teachers said they have decided to discontinue the strike, which began last week over the firing of a first-year music teacher.

The strike had disrupted most of the classes at the school.

Positive Impact, No Conflict,
Known Principals

Story 19

Midwest Oil Co., the United Oil Workers and state employment officials today announced a $5 million program to retrain 4,000 state oil workers who were laid off indefinitely last spring when Rich Oil Co. closed its plants in South Gate and Middletown.

The sponsors described the new program, scheduled to begin Nov. 1 and run through 1983, an unprecedented attempt to match specific laid-off workers with training for new jobs in labor-short fields such as oil workers, drillers and mechanics.

Story 20

GNC Energy Corp. of Dallas and Standard Oil Co. of California announced agreement to develop facilities to produce oil on GNC's 2,000 acres of tar sand holdings near Middletown.

The companies said the process is targeted to produce 40,000 barrels per day. Under the agreement, Standard Oil Co. has to build the facilities and repair the roads into the land. The project eventually will need more than 1,000 workers.

Story 21

An emergency medicine/cardiac care center, called the largest in a private hospital west of the Mississippi River, is slated to be opened Friday by the St. Jospeh Medical Center

The new $7.5 million, 51,000 square-foot structure, designed by Mills, John and Rigdon Architects of Texas, is adjacent to the existing hospital.

Story 22

Elementary and secondary schools of Middletown will receive enough money to cover the costs of new students and protect them from declining enrollments.

The State Commission for Education approved a plan that will give to them $3 million in new money and at least $3 million more in January if the economy improves.

Story 23

Rep. Carl Peters today said federal aid for state highways would total $25 million this coming year, a new high for the state.

Story 24

A judge for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has reaffirmed a 1980 ruling that the proposed liquified natural gas facilities at Point Quake, 15 miles east from this city, does not constitute an unacceptable public safety hazard.

A federal court ordered a review of the earlier decision because of new qualified information about the presence of nearby earthquake faults that was presented to the Commission.

Negative Impact, Conflict,
Unknown Principals

Story 25

A 7-year-old boy, believed to be the youngest criminal trial defendant in state history, was ordered placed in a local foster home Thursday when a judge learned that the mother has been convicted of selling marijuana to children.

Jamie Means appeared not to understand that he was being taken away from his mother.

Story 26

A local Baptist deacon beat his wife to death with a fishing weight said the police this morning. Wilbur Charren, 34, admitted that he struck his wife, Susan, 32, in the head at least a dozen times with a 3-pound salmon weight last January.

Story 27

A robber described by police as "unbelievably brutal" used a knife to sever and steal the finger of an elderly widow who could not remove her rings because the finger was swollen.

When the 76-year-old Middletown woman told the robber that her finger was too swollen to remove the rings, he used a knife he was carrying to cut the finger off. The woman who was not identified by police, underwent surgery this morning to repair severed blood vessels. The finger was not recovered.

Story 28

A two-day-old girl, born two months prematurely after her mother was shot and killed, remained in critical condition at San Gabriel Community Hospital.

The 3-pound infant's mother was shot by her commmon law husband - recently escaped from a state prison - during a quarrel in the South Side of the city.

Story 29

A Middletown teacher was arrested yesterday when he was attacking a 14-year-old girl student in a lockers room of the Central High School. The police were called by a classmate of the victim who heard her asking for help and saw the brutal action of the professor.

The young girl had to be taken to the hospital to receive attention for several injuries in her body and a concussion. Her agressor, John Crook, 38, is in jail.

Story 30

Two women were held for nine months and another for a week in a littered apartment in a poor section of the city where they were chained at the neck, beaten and repeatedly raped, police said today. A neighbor said she knew the women were being held captive and could hear them screaming but never called the police.

After the older of the three women, 37, managed to escape, policemen rescued the other two, 25 and 20, who were naked and "almost crazy" from nine months of torture. Their "jailer" Leonard Williams, a 39-year-old laborer, has not been caught by the police.

Negative Impact, Conflict,
Known Principals

Story 31

A tornado touched down between Middletown and Fritch shortly after 7 p.m. killing five people - including lawyer Frank Parker, former city council President of Fritch. Several houses were destroyed and heavy structural damage was sustained by the Phillips Petroleum Co. gas plant.

Four of those killed were Phillips employees. The plant will be closed for an indefinite period for repairs.

Story 32

Last-minute talks to avert the layoffs of up to 300 Middletown employees broke down and the first of 50 indefinite layoffs began. The talks between the city and the City Employees Association, stalled for more than a month, were aimed at saving the city's recession-battered treasury an estimated $1.3 million.

Story 33

An estimated 4,000 local homeowners will be affected by the Supreme Court's ruling that enables federally chartered savings and loans to demand full payment of loans on homes that are sold.

Virtually all homeowners who hold fixed-rate loans from a federally chartered savings and loan association must now

pay off their mortages whenever they sell their homes or the buyer must renegotiate the loan.

Story 34

The Supreme Court ruled Monday that Middletown's two hundred handicapped children have no legal right to receive the quality of special help they would require to achieve their full potential in public schools.

The justices ruled that school districts do not have to provide sign-language interpreters to the deaf children attending public schools.

Story 35

A local university professor killed his wife yesterday in the San Gabriel Community Hospital where she was being kept technically alive by a respirator for more than two weeks. Jeffy Hoffine, 35, mathematics professor at Middletown University, was accused of murder by shooting his wife, Glenda, twice in the head. Hoffine and the victim's parents had asked hospital officials to unhook the respirator because her brain has ceased to function. The hospital refused.

Story 36

Middletown City Councilman Arthur Miller was accused this morning of conflict-of-interest violations in voting to award millions of dollars in grants to an East Side

anti-poverty organization that was paying him thousands of dollars in rent.

A 10-count accusation issued by the executive director of the state's Fair Political Practices Commission accused Miller of failing to publicly disclose about $142,000 in outside income, including $57,000 he received in rent from the East City Community Union.

Negative Impact, No Conflict,
Unknown Principals

Story 37

One out of 80 residents of Middletown is addicted to alcohol or abuses it, and 1,000 of them are teen-agers, according to a study conducted by a group of city officers. The report indicates that the alcohol addiction has doubled between 1978 and 1982.

Story 38

About 10 cases of a penicillin-resistant strain of gonorrhea have been reported here in the first six months of this year, according to a San Gabriel Hospital spokesman. The cases have been found among urban poor people and prostitutes.

Most of the penicillin-resistant cases (2,100 in United States, last year) are being successfully treated with the antibiotic spectinomycin. But spectinomycin fails in some

cases especially when there is throat infection or another infection, such as syphilis.

Story 39

Twenty local children died and 17 were injured this morning when a Middletown school bus fell into the little canyon of Dry River two miles south of here. The children were students at Center Elementary School in a trip to the regional museum at Redwood City.

The driver, who was reported as in critical condition by a San Gabriel Hospital spokesman, said to the police that the brakes of the bus did not respond when he tried to stop the old bus.

Story 40

Toxic gases produced by burning synthetic furnishings containing polyurethane contributed to the deaths of six persons last September in the fire at the Palace Hotel, police officers reported today.

The officers said that the blood of all 12 victims had elevated levels of hydrogen cyanide, which they termed "a potential primary and/or secondary cause of death."

Story 41

At least 18 persons were hospitalized for treatment of smoke inhalation after a fire broke out in a computer center here. A hospital spokesman said none of those treated was

in serious condition, and a Middletown Fire Department official said the blaze was already out when firefighters arrived at the center, on the second floor of the Market Street building.

Story 42

A Middletown teen-age boy was killed when he was swept over the edge of Wailua Falls on the Hawaiian island of Kauai and carried down a 150-foot cascade.

Police said Wyn Thomas, 13, was walking with his family in a rocky area above the falls when he slipped while crossing a stream.

Negative Impact, No Conflict,
Known Principals

Story 43

The second substantial water rate increase in two years was approved by the Middletown Department of Water and Power, but public response so far has been slight.

The increase will affect about 50,000 residential customers and 10,000 commercial and industrial users. It is expected to provide an additional $2 million annually.

Story 44

The failure of Millcot's chain of stores, headquartered in Middletown, was one of 342 state business casualties in

the week ending October. This represented an 18 percent increase over the previous week.

Story 45

Color television sets more than 12-years-old give off too much radiation to be used by children for video games and home computers, doctors warn.

The radiation is a problem because people sit very close to the TVs when they are using them as computer screens, said a report by doctors from the Veterans Medical Center in Washington. The report was confirmed by the U.S. Surgeon General.

Story 46

A fire raced through the 50-year-old Phi Kappa Theta fraternity house late yesterday, killing the quarterback of Middletown College football team and injuring eight others. Fire officidal said the house did not have a fire alarm.

The body of Dennis P. Dougherty Jr., 19, a sophomore from North Hills, was found in a second-floor hallway.

Story 47

State health authorities have determined that an excessive number of cases of melanoma, a dangerous type of skin cancer, have been detected among males who work in the Caltrans headquarters building here.

A study by Dr. Donald Austin, chief of cancer epidemiology for the Department of Human Health Services, has revealed that 15 cases of melanoma occurred in males working in the building during the 18 months ending in June, 1982.

Story 48

"Killer bees," slowly moving north to the United States, are every bit as aggressive as claimed and could seriously hurt American agriculture, Agriculture Department scientists say in a study to be presented in Science Magazine.

The Africanized bee, which descends from the South African variety imported into Brazil in 1956, rises to attacks on its hives much more quickly and aggresively than do European-derived honey bees and delivers eight times more stings.

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONS FOR Q-SORTING OF 48 NEWS STORIES

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SORTING NEWS STORIES

1. Please remember that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers in this study. It is an attempt to measure how you, a newspaper reader, rank a set of news stories.
2. Please imagine that the deck of new stories (white cards) are those available on a given day to possibly be used in a local newspaper. On the basis of the stories' interest and value, rank the stories in the order in which you would most like to find and read to least would like to find and read in a local newspaper, which is supposed to circulate in the city of Middletown.
3. Lay aside the blue identification cards for a moment. Take the remaining white cards which have the news stories on them, and read each story carefully.
4. After you have finished reading every card, place it in one of the three piles, according to your desire of finding and reading it. In the left-hand pile you create, place all stories that you would most like to find and read. In the right-hand pile, place all stories that you would least like to find and read. Put all stories left over in the middle pile.

Most like to find and read	Stories left over	Least like to find and read

5. Now take the group of blue identification cards. Spread this deck of cards in front of you, left to right, No. 9 to No. 1 as follows:

2 Stories	4 Stories	5 Stories	8 Stories	10 Stories
-9-	-8-	-7-	-6-	-5-

8 Stories	5 Stories	4 Stories	2 Stories
-4-	-3-	-2-	-1-

6. Pick up the left-hand pile that you previously sorted. From these stories, choose two that you <u>would most like to find and read</u>, and place them on the top of Card No. 9. From the remaining stories you have in your hand, take four that you would most like to find and read and place them on top of Card No. 8. Go on down the line until you run out of stories that you have from the left-hand pile. (At any time, you may change your mind on the placement of the stories, if you wish,)
7. Now, pick up the right-hand deck of stories that you originally sorted. From these stories, choose two you <u>would least like to find and read</u> and place them on top of Card No. 1. From the stories you have left in your hand, choose four stories that you would least like to find and read and place them on top of Card No. 2. Work on up the line until you run out of stories that were in the right-hand pile.

8. Now pick up the middle pile of stories. Begin sorting them at the point where you previously ran out of stories when you were moving from left to right from Card No. 9.

   For example, let's say that on the first pile you ran out of stories when you got to card No. 6. In fact, let's say you ended with only three stories to lay on Card No. 6, even though it calls for eight stories. So, from the middle pile you now have in your hands, choose the five stories you would most like to find and read and add them to the three already on Card No. 6.

   Then go to Card No. 5 which calls for 10 stories that you would most like to find and read from the ones you have left. Continue down the line until you run out of stories.

9. When all the cards are sorted and the correct number is on each blue identification card in your order of preference, pick up the piles from left to right in the following order: Pick up pile No. 9. including the blue identification card on the bottom. Place pile No. 9 on top of pile No. 8. Then pick up pile Nos. 9 and 8 combined and place on top of pile No. 7. Continue down the line until you have all stories in one pile. Place the rubber band around the total pile and you are finished.

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